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## **The Government Withdraws from the Reorganization Plan of Attractions Hippiques**

**Montréal, February 20, 2009** – The Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Monique Jérôme-Forget, has announced that the government is withdrawing from the reorganization plan of Attractions Hippiques. “The announcement, by leaders in the horse racing industry, of their refusal to approve the reorganization plan presented to them by the trustee in bankruptcy, RSM Richter, indicates that the discussions are bound to fail,” the Minister said.

Since 1995, governments have provided subsidies in excess of \$400 million to support the horse racing industry. Despite this assistance, the industry continues to decline. The trend in wagers on horse races reflects this situation. From a value of \$345 million in 1980, wagers have dropped to \$136 million in 2008. In addition, 80% of this amount is wagered on races held outside Québec and shown on screens at Hippo Clubs. Obviously, this form of entertainment no longer holds the same attraction for the public.

At a time when public finances feel the strain of the global economic situation and public needs in health and education continue to demand more resources, the government concludes that it is not socially acceptable to provide public financial support for horse races.

It remains up to the Superior Court to render its decision, next March 9, on the continuation of Attractions Hippiques’ activities.

Should the activities of Attractions Hippiques come to an end, the Minister intends to hold discussions with her colleagues the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on assistance measures for the workers and breeders affected by this situation. The government will make sure that these transition measures can be implemented quickly.

In such a case, Loto-Québec would withdraw its 265 video lottery terminals from the racetracks in Montréal and Aylmer. Regarding Montréal, this will significantly reduce the gaming supply in a precarious socio-economic zone.

“Horse racing activities are not part of the essential missions of government. However, the government does have a responsibility to offer transitional assistance measures to the workers and breeders in this industry,” Minister Jérôme-Forget concluded.

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